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INFORMATION

? 11 Sep 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Mid-Day Report on Hijacking Situation

The following are the major developments since my memorandum to you this morning on the hijacking situation:

Negotiations and Passengers

The negotiations for the release of the hostages seem to have reached a critical stage. The fedayeen leaders apparently began to panic when the rumors of military intervention reached them this morning and began taking a series of uncoordinated decisions. There is considerable confusion in Amman and the situation appears extremely fluid, but here is the latest report from Red Cross representative Rochat:

-- "Fantastic tension" reigns at the PFLP headquarters and "we are seeing these people as they really are--angry and desperate." He is trying to calm them and has made an appeal to reestablish the previous negotiating position and avoid reacting to rumors.

-- He fully anticipates that the PFLP will take some action to demonstrate the seriousness of their intent. The PFLP will give him certain "warning measures" this afternoon.

-- The three aircraft have been wired for bombing, but the passengers have been removed from them. The passengers are still, however, at the landing strip. Rochat is "nearly convinced" that they will not come to immediate harm and hopes to learn more about what can be done this afternoon.

-- The PFLP has sanctioned the evacuation from Jordan of the passengers presently at the hotel in Amman with "no conditions" attached. A first group of 66 has already been evacuated by air from Jordan and are headed for Cyprus.

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-- The deadline on the ultimatum has been cancelled and no new deadline has been announced.

The Germans are again showing some indications of breaking away from the multinational approach. A high official of Chancellor Brandt's SPD is reportedly to be sent to Amman to make contact with the PFLP. We are making a forceful representation direct to Chancellor Brandt, if possible, urging the Germans to desist from making any special deal and to recall his emissary or at least instruct him to deal only with Red Cross representative Rochat.

An earlier report of a further hijacking has proved false.

Situation in Amman

The cease-fire reached yesterday appears to be holding up fairly well so far. The situation is still very tense, however, and new fighting could break out at any time.

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